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Troy's county shop raises questions

Editor:

I went to a Meet the Candidate meeting last October here in Troy. At the meeting, I asked [Lincoln County] Commissioner John Konzen about the rumor of the Troy county shop being for sale. He said yes! It was because it was worth more as a commercial site than as a county shop site. They plan on building a new shop.

I have done a little looking into when the land was bought for the shop. It was bought in 1960. I have had one of my neighbor's remind me of why the shop was put on the highway in the first place. It is my understanding that it was put on the highway so the county did not have to contend with the load limits in the spring during breakup.

All of this brings questions to my mind.

Can we as a county afford a

new shop? I have been reading that we can't even afford a new jail. After being in the same spot for 40-plus years are they going to check for groundwater contaminants and clean up as per the federal CERCLA (Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act) or will it be a case of "buyer beware"?

If the new shop is built off the highway does the county have to follow the spring break-up rules that everyone else in the county has to follow or are they exempt?

The shop is in an area being serviced by public water and public sewer, how will the new shop be serviced and what safeguards will be in place to protect the groundwater?

Reading in the Source Water Protection Practices bulletin from the EPA, which a person can find

by typing "EPA 916-f-01-022" into a search on the internet, it says, "Any oil spill can pose a serious threat to human health and the environment, requires remediation that extends beyond your facility's boundary, and results in substantial cleanup costs." It also says, "The location of the facility must be considered in relation to drinking water wells, streams, ponds and ditches (perennial or intermittent)." It also states that, "one gallon of oil can contaminate one million gallons of water."

Is the county going to follow Troy's lead? When Troy moved their shop they put it downriver of Troy. Less likely to pollute the town's aquifer if a spill does happen.

What is the need for a new shop?

If the county does pollute the

groundwater, is the county going to buy the land at fair market value of the land before the pollution?

I would think with the commissioners dealing with the Superfund site in Libby, due to the creosote in the aquifer, they would understand the dangers of spills into aquifers and they would do everything in their power to avoid even the remote possibility of a spill.

Are there going to be public meetings explaining the need for the move or is this something the commissioners are trying to slide through without public input?

Is this something the people will have a chance to vote on or is it something the commissioners are going to do on their own?

Does anyone else have any of these same concerns?

Glenn Garrison, Troy